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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1875  
INFO RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 3522  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 8456  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3843  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1392  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 2835  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 5238  
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 0791  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

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SIPDIS

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STATE FOR NEA/MAG, DRL

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SMIG](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: Moratinos Visits Morocco to Discuss Illegal Migration

Ref: Casablanca 1068; Casablanca 1052; Rabat 2110

¶1. (U) Summary: Spanish FM Miguel Angel Moratinos visited Morocco October 11 to discuss illegal immigration with FM Benaissa in the wake of the massive immigrant assaults on Spanish border posts in northern Morocco (reftels). The foreign ministers agreed to create a bilateral ad hoc ministerial committee to facilitate joint action on immigration and to convene a Euro-African ministerial meeting inviting all of the countries involved in regional migration issues. Despite the urgency of the situation, Spanish officials thought the Euro-African ministerial would likely not be held until 2006. End summary.

¶2. (U) Following massive assaults on the borders by sub-Saharan Africans attempting to reach the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Mellila in northern Morocco, Spanish FM Moratinos and his counterpart Mohamed Benaissa met in Rabat October 11 to discuss the urgent migration issues facing both countries. According to French daily Le Matin, the Ministers declared that the question of illegal immigration "is not a Spanish-Moroccan but an Afro-European problem which relates to all Africa and Europe." Consequently, Spain has asked the EU for \$48 million to help Morocco control its borders and combat human trafficking. During the October 11 press conference following the minister's joint meeting, Moratinos insisted that it is "an important and urgent priority not only for Spain but for the entire EU to design a very ambitious policy for cooperation in tackling immigration."

¶3. (U) According to Moroccan official news agency Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), Deputy FM Taieb Fassi Fihri asserted following the ministers' meeting that "Morocco is taking its responsibility in the fight against illegal immigration and is determined to protect its borders," explaining that this is despite the fact that Morocco has not received "one euro or a single dollar" from Europe for keeping illegal migrants away from its borders. Fassi Fihri added that "Morocco alone cannot continue to tackle immigration"

¶4. (U) Moratinos and Benaissa agreed to set up an ad hoc bilateral interdepartmental joint committee to tackle migratory flow challenges faced by the two countries and the

region. According to the ministers' declaration, this committee will meet as soon as possible to evaluate migration in the region and to work out a strategy with adequate and sustainable solutions. The same declaration announced that the two countries will organize a Euro-African ministerial conference to be held in Morocco that will involve all the countries of "origin, transit and destination."

15. (SBU) Following the meetings, Poloff spoke with Counselor at the Spanish Embassy Jorge Cabezas who said that the Spanish are "generally happy," with the collaboration between the two countries thus far on the issue. He estimated that the ad hoc ministerial meeting would likely not occur until mid-November, noting that the decisions on which ministries are to be involved will take some time. Indicating that the GOS had already contacted both the European Union and the African Union, Cabezas predicted that the larger Euro-African ministerial convening all of the countries involved would likely not take place at least until early 2006.